



# Washington State Department of Agriculture News Release

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Contact: Joel Kangiser (360) 902-2013

Mike Louisell (360) 902-1813

WASHINGTON STATE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

P.O. Box 42560, Olympia, Washington 98504-2560

## **Agriculture Department obtains court order in Grant County against aerial applicator**

OLYMPIA – The state Department of Agriculture (WSDA) last week obtained a court order that prohibits a long-time aerial applicator from performing further commercial pesticide work without a license. The injunction was issued Dec. 5 by Grant County Superior Court.

Operating Pearson Aircraft in several states, Phil M. Pearson often has worked out of the Wilson Creek Airport in Grant County. WSDA assessed an \$1,800 penalty against Pearson this past summer for applying pesticides without a license and he owes several thousand dollars as a result of fines levied in the 1990s for violations of state pesticide law.

Pearson has not had a license to apply pesticides commercially in this state since 1996. Agency investigators, however, are aware of aerial spraying Pearson has done this past year for controlling weeds in wheat and other crops. Pearson has failed to respond to attempts to negotiate fines or to participate in an administrative hearing to explain his actions. If Pearson continues to do business in Washington, he is subject to contempt of court sanctions, including fines and imprisonment.

WSDA enforces state and federal laws to protect people, property, and the environment against the improper use of pesticides, including those operating without a license. The agency licenses some 24,000 pesticide applicators, dealers, consultants, public operators, and structural pest inspectors. Investigators enforce laws on following label requirements, proper licensing, spray drift, storage, record keeping, posting of information, and other issues. To ensure that a pesticide applicator or structural pest inspector is properly licensed, or to file a complaint, call WSDA in Olympia at (877) 301-4555.

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